

Appl. No.: 09/977,896
Amdt. Dated June 20, 2008
Reply to Office Action of 05/30/2008

REMARKS

This amendment is submitted in reply to the final Office Action dated February 5, 2008 and the Notice of Panel Decision from Pre-Appeal Review (hereinafter "Notice of Panel Decision") dated May 30, 2008. The Notice of Panel Decision has indicated that claims 12-18 are allowed and claims 1-11 remain rejected.

Applicants have canceled claims 1-11, without prejudice, leaving only allowed claims 12-18 remaining. As the present amendment introduces no new issues, Applicants respectfully request that the amendment be entered. Upon entry of the present amendment Applicants further respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of all now-pending claims of the present application.

Appl. No.: 09/977,896
Amdt. Dated June 20, 2008
Reply to Office Action of 05/30/2008

CONCLUSION

In view of the remarks and the amendment submitted above, it is respectfully submitted that the present claims are in condition for immediate allowance. It is therefore respectfully requested that a Notice of Allowance be issued. The Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney to resolve any remaining issues in order to expedite examination of the present invention.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,



Chad L. Thorson
Registration No. 55,675

Customer No. 00826
ALSTON & BIRD LLP
Bank of America Plaza
101 South Tryon Street, Suite 4000
Charlotte, NC 28280-4000
Tel Charlotte Office (704) 444-1000
Fax Charlotte Office (704) 444-1111

ELECTRONICALLY FILED USING THE EFS-WEB ELECTRONIC FILING SYSTEM OF THE UNITED STATES PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE ON June 20, 2008.

LEGAL01/13085539v1